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MN021701. Navy Medicine Reaches West African Village
By LTJG Christina Skacan, West African Medical Outreach Program

DODOWA, Ghana - By the hundreds, the villagers waited patiently in the shade, hoping to receive medical care from Navy physicians, medical specialists, nurses, and corpsmen who have opened an ad hoc clinic here.

As part of West African Medical Outreach Program (WA-MOP), Navy Medicine healthcare professionals from Naval Reserve Fleet Hospital Dallas deployed to Ghana beginning in early April and will spend two weeks visiting seven villages, including Dodowa.

"We scouted the villages based upon medical need, viable travel time to and from base camp and support from the local population," said CAPT David L. Maserang, MSC, commander of the West African Medical Outreach Program. "But ultimately the Ghanaians made the final decision on which villages to visit."

Fleet Hospital Dallas Sailors combined efforts with Ghanaian medical personnel from the 37th Military Hospital in Accra, a local clinic in Dodowa and the Ghana Army to provide medical services to nearly 500 people in Dodowa. Most patients visited a physician, dentist or optometrist, and many received a yellow fever immunization or vitamin A supplement.

Some of the medical needs were quickly resolved. Noticing a lump inside one twelve-year-old boy's neck, CDR Larry Boyd, MC, who as a civilian physician practices medicine in Denver City, Texas, made a one-inch incision, removed a benign cyst and stitched the boy within a few moments. Doctors prescribed seven-year-old Robert Tei an anti-fungal medication to fight an infection as well as a chewable multi-vitamin.

In all, Fleet Hospital Dallas conducted 290 medical consultations, 155 eye examinations, 56 dental appointments, which included 46 tooth extractions, while administering 54 yellow fever shots and 89 doses of vitamin A. Medications to treat a variety of conditions were also distributed.

"It is good to work together," said Issah Abukari, a hygiene specialist in the Ghana Army, who trained in San Antonio. "Our medical situations are

often not that different."

Fleet Hospital Dallas also brought 3,700 pairs of prescription glasses and 1,500 pairs of sunglasses to distribute throughout the seven villages.

At about midday a Fleet Hospital Dallas team led by CDR Nancy Cathey, MSC, distributed math, literature, writing and speech textbooks to students from the local Dodowa Presbyterian Elementary School.

"These books were donated by Gadsden Independent School District in New Mexico," said Cathey. "We will also give out school supplies donated by a school in San Antonio."

Surveying the activity in his village, Paramount Chief Nenetetteh Apperkon III, wearing the ball cap presented by Fleet Hospital Dallas, proudly and said, "Is good."

The 55-member Fleet Hospital detachment in Ghana consists entirely of Naval Reservists who volunteered to be part of this healthcare initiative. Fleet Hospital Dallas, located at Joint Reserve Base Dallas-Fort Worth and commanded by CAPT Jerry Kelley, MC, has about 900 Reservists from Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

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MN021702. Navy Medicine Allied Health Institutions Get Accreditation Honors

WASHINGTON, DC - Navy Medicine's allied health education institutions were inspected for re-accreditation last week, a periodic review that helps ensures Navy healthcare students receive quality education. The Council on Occupational Education audit team cited complete compliance in all areas and gave two specific commendations.

"It's rare to receive a flawless report," said Cheryl Painter, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's accreditation manager. "BUMED staff and the personnel at the branch campuses worked hard to achieve this goal."

The Council on Occupational Education is a national accreditation association that assures educational institutions meet or exceed criteria for educational quality. It accredits Navy Medicine's allied health training institutions.

BUMED and its ten branch campuses make up Navy Medicine's allied health institutions. The campuses include the Naval Schools of Health Sciences in Bethesda, Portsmouth and San Diego; Naval Hospital Corps School; Naval Operational Medicine Institute; Naval Undersea Medicine Institute; Naval Ophthalmic Support and Training Activity; National Naval Dental School's Maxillofacial Technician Program; and the Field Medical Service Schools in Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune. More than 5,000 Sailors graduate from 28 programs within Navy Medicine each year.

According to Painter, accreditation is good news for Sailors attending educational programs at any of the ten branch campuses. Students attending accredited institutions have an increased chance of transferring their coursework for credit to degree granting institutions.

Institutional accreditation is a prerequisite for programmatic accreditation, which allows students to participate in state or national certification and licensure examinations.

Final accreditation status will be determined at the COE's September meeting.

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MN021703. NAMI Doc Selected For National Spirit Of Women Award

PENSACOLA, Fla. - LCDR Ann L. White, MC, a flight surgeon at the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute on Naval Air Station Pensacola, is the winner of the 2002 National Spirit of Women Award.

The Spirit of Women Foundation coordinates a national network of women, women's health care institutions, sponsors, and partners joined in a mission

to improve the health and well being of American women. It selects one healthcare provider annually to receive its Spirit of Women award.

White was recognized as a compassionate physician, exemplary naval officer and inspiring instructor who epitomizes the spirit of volunteerism at its best. She is the founder of Eagle's Flight Ministries, an organization that has enriched the lives of single mothers and their children. Using her own funds, White purchased a bus to transport these families to church and community events, and has volunteered countless hours providing educational and religious instruction while offering safe houses in emergency situations.

White graduated from the University of South Alabama School of Medicine in 1997 and trained in family practice medicine at Pensacola Naval Hospital. She graduated from naval flight surgeon training in 1999.

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MN021704. Naval Reserve Health Professionals Team for Operation Arctic Care By Sgt. Sam Kille, U.S. Marine Force Reserve

COLD BAY, Alaska - Nearly 70 Naval Reservists joined 160 Reserve and active duty Marines, Sailors, soldiers, and airmen recently for Operation Arctic Care 2002, an annual humanitarian mission. All military branches and civilian health professionals provided medical, dental, optometry, and veterinary services to native Alaskans living in remote areas of the Alaskan Peninsula, Pribilof and Aleutian Islands.

"The mission was a cooperative venture," said CAPT Karen Trueblood, MC, the commanding officer of 4th Medical Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group, and officer-in-charge of the exercise. "The under-served communities received free services, while the military deployed into an area of 230,000 square miles. It was an excellent training opportunity."

The free medical care potentially saved lives and was an opportunity for people to learn about the military. Above all, the importance of any exercise - including humanitarian missions - is the way it prepares service members, especially Reservists, for "real world" contingencies.

"This will play into operations in the future, whether joint or coalition, (and) expand the scope of knowledge - not just for 4th FSSG, but for the other services as well," said Trueblood.

Ensuring equipment reached its destinations relied heavily on aircrews from the Army, Alaska National Guard and Coast Guard.

"We had nearly 24,000 pounds of cargo to move in and out of the villages," said Marine Staff Sgt. James Franklin, logistics chief for 4th Med. Battalion. "There was everything from personnel, rations, general cargo, hazardous cargo, to bonded cargo (with) certain time frames for shipment."

The medical personnel performed valuable services for 1,613 patients treated in 11 separate villages. Services included \$900,000 of free dental care, simple medical screenings, eye exams, and vaccinations.

"Before coming here we didn't know what to expect," said CDR Todd Allen, DC, with the 4th Dental Battalion. "We assumed we would be doing a lot of extractions. We ended up doing a wide variety of general dentistry, which saved a lot of teeth."

The 4th FSSG, Marine Forces Reserve, led the annual joint-forces operation.

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MN021705. Navy Medicine Aids In South Pacific Malaria Outbreak

REPUBLIC OF VANUATU - Navy medical researchers, long seeking a way to stem the threat of malaria to military readiness, were asked recently by the government of Vanuatu to aid in a serious outbreak of the disease on two

remote South Pacific islands.

CDR Michael Bangs, MSC; LCDR Jason Maquire, MC; HML Dennis Doolen; Dr. Purnomo Prodjodipuro; and Awalludin Sutamihardja, all of the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit Two (NAMRU-2) based in Jakarta, Indonesia, traveled to Espiritu Santo and Epi to screen the population for malaria and also search for the disease-carrying mosquito itself.

More than 2,350 people in ten villages were screened for infection over the 15 days the team was there. More than 520 were discovered to be infected and were treated.

"Twenty-two percent is a moderately high prevalence of malaria," said CAPT James Beecham III, MC, the commanding officer of the unit. "Some areas we've worked, such as in Irian Jaya (now Papua), Indonesia, have prevalences as high as 80 to 90 percent or more."

Navy Medicine researches way to prevent and treat malaria because of its potentially profound impact on military readiness. During World War II, U.S. troops experienced half a million cases of malaria. It was also a critical problem in Vietnam and during Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. Its impact during conflicts is so devastating that the great American writer Herman Melville wrote, "The history of malaria in war might almost be taken to be the history of war itself."

NAMRU-2 does research on malaria in a region from Vanuatu to Indonesian New Guinea, Sumatra and Java to the Philippine archipelago. It has conducted landmark malarial trials of several drugs developed for the prevention and treatment of malaria.

In addition to working toward finding effective medications to treat malaria, Navy medical researchers are working on a malaria vaccine, which has a far-reaching world health impact. According to the World Health Organization, more than a million people die each year due to malaria.

Navy researchers also provided training to ministry technicians

A team of Australian Army researchers and members of the Republic of Vanuatu's Ministry of Health also participated in the malaria outbreak investigation.

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MN021706. Hearing Researcher Wins Edmund Prince Fowler Award

By JO1 Sonya Ansarov, Naval Medical Center San Diego

SAN DIEGO - Army Col. Richard Kopke, MC, a physician and researcher at Naval Medical Center San Diego, has been awarded the prestigious Edmund Prince Fowler Award for his research in developing medication to make the inner ear more resistant to noise damage, and therefore preventing hearing loss.

The award is given annually by the Triological Society to "bestow upon a worthy recipient the responsibility of furthering the highest standards of perfection in the study, teaching and practice of otolaryngology." Kopke was also accepted as a member of the American Laryngological, Rhinological and Otological Society, or The Triological Society.

"It's a very helpful step to get the research out there to help people," said Kopke about the award. "It gives the research our team has been working on a stamp of approval from a highly respected group of peers and colleagues. It also gives us encouragement to keep moving forward with the research to fully develop it for clinical use."

The Edmund Prince Fowler Award was established by the Triological Society to honors its namesake, a prominent American research otolaryngologist.

Kopke's research is particularly important to service personnel because of the loud noise associated with many member's work. He said it's probably the most common disability service members acquire while on active duty.

About 22,000 new cases of hearing disability are claimed in the military each year.

According to Kopke, wearing the ear plugs and the mechanical hearing protection devices don't offer complete protection, especially if used incorrectly or if the noise is very loud.

Kopke's medication received a patent and later this month the Navy's Office of Naval Research and NMC San Diego will sign an agreement with a company to license the use of the patent to make a commercially available product. ONR and San Diego provided funding and support for Kopke's research.

"It's very exciting that ... people will benefit from this research," said Kopke. "That's what it's all about, helping people through new discoveries."

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MN021707. Charleston Helps Kids 'Kick Butt' At Elementary School
By CDR Mary Jackson, NC, Naval Hospital Charleston, S.C.

CHARLESTON, S.C. - Naval Hospital Charleston's Wellness Department visited Marrington Elementary School recently to support its anti-tobacco campaign.

Previously known as "Kick Butts," at the request of the school principal, and out of courtesy for a teacher whose last name was Butts, the hospital gave the campaign the kinder and gentler name of "SOS" or "Stamp Out Smoking."

The SOS team of health educators - Donna Gardner, Claudia Dion, HM2(SW) Anthony Morris, and LT Yvette Smith-Simon, NC - gave entertaining presentations on the hazards of cigarette smoking, and included a display of the numerous household items that contain some of the harmful chemicals found in tobacco. The display was received with a resounding "eeeeuuwww" from the students.

Each student was given a handout about tobacco use hazards, a "Kick Butt" headband, and fluorescent shoe stickers with an anti-tobacco message. Information about tobacco cessation classes was also distributed to students interested in sharing the info with others at home.

After last year's presentation at the school, parental enrollment in the hospital's tobacco cessation program increased. About 95 percent of the 272 students come from military families.

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MN021708. TRICARE Salutes Naval Hospital Lemoore

ARLINGTON, VA - DoD's TRICARE Management Office is saluting Naval Hospital Lemoore's public relations department for its model promotion of TRICARE.

The TRICARE promotion team, composed of a team of a regional lead agency staff member, marketing expert, advocate, community relations expert, historian, retiree affairs expert, and Sailors well-versed in TRICARE, provided hundreds of briefings and published more than 100 articles in local papers.

The team's efforts was key to an 18 percent increase in TRICARE enrollment in the last 18 months. This increase was especially dramatic since enrollment had leveled off for a number of years.

Some of the team's activities that helped increase enrollment included:

- customer service training to hundreds of hospital staff members, including training that qualifies anyone to lead a facility tour.
- special "welcome back" activities for seniors, who were once skeptical of TRICARE. Activities included house meetings, briefings, and health fairs.

- internal and external media efforts that placed good news success stories in selected publications.

Team members include: John Herrod, Diane Holmes, Chuck Moss, AT2 Thomas Focht, HM3 Jason Graves, HM3 Ryan Dilks, and public affairs officer LT Don Capoldo, MSC.

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MN021709. Navy Doc Selected For Oncology Master Class

By JO1 Sonya Ansarov, Naval Medical Center San Diego

SAND DIEGO - LCDR Thomas Chung, MC, a staff radiation oncologist at Naval Medical Center San Diego, has been accepted to attend the European School of Oncology's first-ever master class in clinical oncology.

The one-week class will be held Aug. 4-9 in Montecatini Terme, Italy. It will be lead by renowned experts in cancer treatment.

"I hope to translate this experience into improved patient care in radiation oncology and in turn improve oncologic care in the Navy health care system," said Chung.

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MN021710. TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Marks First Anniversary

April 1, 2002, marked the first anniversary of the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program. The senior pharmacy benefit became available last year to 1.5 million beneficiaries age 65 and older through the Fiscal Year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act, and has become one of TRICARE's greatest success stories.

The TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program is one of the best pharmacy benefits available to older Americans, according to those who use the benefit. It entitles Medicare-eligible retirees of the uniformed services, their family members and survivors to the same pharmacy benefit as uniformed services beneficiaries under age 65. Many of these beneficiaries had no pharmacy coverage previously, and the cost of their medications absorbed a significant portion of their household budgets.

During its first year, 10.5 million TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program prescriptions have been filled through the National Mail Order Pharmacy and at local retail pharmacies. Since its implementation, beneficiaries have reported glowing accounts of its outstanding operation.

Retired CAPT Clarence Creel and his wife Eunice think the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program "is the greatest thing since sliced bread." They are saving nearly \$4,100 per year on prescription medications.

According to retired Army Col. Chuck Partridge of the National Association for Uniformed Services, the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program was "a major step in restoring the promise of lifetime health care."

TRICARE Management Activity officials expect the second year of the program to be even more successful than the first. For additional information about the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program, please visit the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy

<<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy>> or call the toll-free telephone number, 1-877-DoD-MEDS (1-877-363-6337) between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday.

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MN021711. Healthwatch: Good Habits Can Control Some Cancers

By Aveline V. Allen, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Cancer may be one of the most frightening diagnoses there is - yet, there are practical steps you can take to help prevent its onset or catch it early before it can cause serious health effects.

April is Cancer Control Month, and the American Cancer Society (ACS),

recommends practicing habits that can help prevent several forms of common cancers. Here are a few:

- Smoking and drinking alcohol may cause cancer. Avoid using tobacco and alcohol. Cigarettes, cigars, pipes and smokeless tobacco can cause cancer and should not be used.

"While excessive alcohol use can be associated with certain cancers, any amount of smoking or tobacco use is dangerous," said LCDR Vincent Herrin, MC, oncologist, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. "Perhaps one third of all cancer deaths could be prevented by smoking cessation. That is a huge number of cancer deaths that could be prevented by behavior modification."

- Skin cancer can be prevented by staying in the shade as much as you can, wearing a hat and shirt when in the sun and using sunscreen.

"The number of cases of melanoma, an aggressive, potentially deadly skin cancer, has skyrocketed over recent decades," said Herrin. "Use of sun screens and protective clothing can greatly diminish the risk of developing this and other less deadly skin cancers, as can self-skin examination."

- The food that we eat has been linked to certain types of cancer, so it is a good rule of thumb to eat a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains such as pasta and bread, and cut down on high fat foods.

Research shows that, in adults, approximately one-third of all cancer-related deaths are linked to dietary factors and lack of exercise.

"We don't know exactly what role diet plays in cancer risk, but it is clear that a healthy diet and exercise can lower the risk for cancer," said Herrin.

- Breast cancer can be detected and treated early by doing monthly at-home self breast exams.

"Self-breast exams are important, especially combined with yearly exams and mammograms beginning at the appropriate age," said Herrin. "Know your family history, because this is a key risk factor. Also for women, periodic PAP smears and gynecological exams are very important for early detection of cervical cancer."

It is a fact that if certain cancers are found in the early stages, the chances for treatment and control are more successful.

"For men, yearly digital rectal exams and a PSA, a blood test, can help detect prostate cancer in the early stages," said Herrin. "This should usually begin around age 50, though younger for African-Americans."

"Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, so prevention and early detection should be a priority for all of us," said Herrin.